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**From:** revidnihcru [mailto:urchins@hotmail.com]

**Sent:** Sunday, June 17, 2007 9:11 AM

**To:** MLPAComments

**Subject:** Mendocino County Closure Proposals

Eric Wilcox  
31560 Sherwood Road  
Fort Bragg, Ca. 95437  
707-964-3168  
Commercial Urchin Diver  
F&G # L08650

The recommended closures of Cuffy's Cove and McKerricker State Park and Caspar Bay are unacceptable closures. As a diver working out of Albion, Cuffy's Cove is a safe harbor for urchin diving and we depend gravely upon this area for our livelihood. Caspar Bay is also a safe harbor for urchin diving. McKerricker is a highly productive area for sea urchin. Closing these areas will increase the urchin population to previous commercial harvest levels destroying the kelp beds of the future. At one point in recent history, the mayor of San Diego paid a bounty on each sea urchin due to their destructive nature to the kelp beds. Are we trying to repeat failures in history by restoring sea urchins to such destructive levels? With destroyed kelp beds due to an exploding urchin population also destroys the rock and finfish rookeries that depend upon the kelp beds for their reproduction and survival. Sea urchins also compete with abalone for tidal resource space and are more successful than abalone, thus the MLPA is detrimental to a healthy abalone population. In essence the MLPA is more destructive than productive in the far future.

There are other areas that would be better suited for closures. Mendocino Bay has the most diverse terrain of rock and sand that supports a greater variety of species. Also, from Usal to Bear Harbor is a larger area that is less accessible to the public but not to commercial fishing, and also has a more diverse bottom of rock and sand that supports a greater diversity of species.

Science without practical experience from those who have spent 20 years diving the area is shoddy work based on theory without concern or thoughtfulness of the effects. We have a very different environment than Australia or New Zealand. We have some of the most productive sections of coast in the world, with the largest sea urchins and abalone. The sea urchin population has remained extremely sustainable with commercial harvest resulting in the healthiest kelp beds and rock fish nurseries in the last 150 years. The MLPA is a reversal of this health promising barren kelp forest with fewer rock and fin fish. How scientific is that? It seems to me that public sentiment is at action without knowledge of scientific data to implement real concern for the future of our coasts.

Look at the rock fish data since sea urchin harvesting has occurred along California's North Coast. Rock fish populations have boomed. Not until the unregulated live fish industry and dragging fishery did these populations fall. Now with proper regulation of these industries have rock fish populations have rebounded. But, without the kelp beds that the MLPA promises to destroy, rock fish populations in these areas will crash. This logic is science, yours is not, yours' is an agenda written by people in offices who have no working knowledge of how the ecosystem works and dooms any productivity it claims to failure.

Sincerely,  
Eric Wilcox